

## **A HOW-TO GUIDE FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT...**

### ***... on the California High-Speed Train Project's "Bay Area to Central Valley Revised Draft Program Environmental Impact Report Material"***

**March 12, 2010**

#### **Introduction**

The Authority has started a 45-day public comment period on the "Bay Area to Central Valley Revised Draft Program Environmental Impact Report Material" (which is available at [www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/library](http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/library)), as part of the environmental review process for California's high-speed train project.

#### **Background**

The California High-Speed Rail Authority in 2007 released the Bay Area to Central Valley High-Speed Train (HST) Program Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) that examined the environmental impacts of the proposed HST system connecting the San Francisco Bay Area and Central Valley regions, within the broad corridor between and including the Altamont Pass and Pacheco Pass. The Authority certified the Final Program EIR in July 2008 and selected the Pacheco Pass Alignment Alternative serving San Francisco via San Jose as the preferred network alternative to connect the HST between the Bay Area and the Central Valley.

#### **Why Has the Bay Area to Central Valley HST Final Program EIR Been Revised?**

A legal challenge filed in August 2008 resulted in a ruling by a California Superior Court that the Final Program EIR complied with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in most respects, however corrective work was necessary in certain areas (1) the description of the alignment of HST tracks between San Jose and Gilroy and impacts on residences, businesses, the Monterey Highway, and Union Pacific freight operations; (2) the potential need for additional right-of-way acquisition in light of Union Pacific's unwillingness to allow use of its right-of-way for HST; and (3) land use impacts along the San Francisco Peninsula. The Authority set aside its July 2008 decision and is now taking steps to comply with the court's ruling. The additional information and analysis in the Revised Draft Program EIR Material is tailored to comply with the court's ruling.

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## What Has Been Revised?

The Revised Draft Program EIR Material includes the following information:

- **Revised Project Description and Revised Impact Analyses for San Jose to Gilroy** — Revised project description for San Jose to Gilroy clarifies that HST tracks would be located adjacent to, and not in, Union Pacific Railroad's mainline right-of-way and clarifies the relationship of the HST to the Monterey Highway. Includes revised alignment maps and cross section. Includes revised discussion of impacts for land use, traffic, aesthetics and visual, and cultural resources.
- **New Discussion of Union Pacific Railroad Statements Refusing To Allow Use of Its Rights-of-Way and Potential Need for Additional Property for HST** — Summary of Union Pacific's 2008 and 2009 letters to the Authority and their relationship to the program EIR analysis. Includes new discussion of whether and to what extent Union Pacific's position on use of its rights-of-way results in the need for additional residential or commercial property for each HST alignment alternative.
- **New Discussion of Impacts on Union Pacific Railroad Freight Operations** — Includes new discussion of how the alignment alternatives may affect Union Pacific Railroad freight operations by virtue of being in or adjacent to Union Pacific Railroad operating rights-of-way, potential for secondary environmental impacts, and mitigation strategies.
- **New Discussion of Revised Draft Program EIR Material and Designation of a Preferred Network Alternative for Connecting the Bay Area to the Central Valley** — Includes new discussion synthesizing information in the revised material and concludes that the new and revised information does not change the recommendation in the 2008 Final Program EIR that the Pacheco Pass Network Alternative serving San Francisco via San Jose is the preferred network alternative.

In addition, the Revised Draft Program EIR Material includes needed revisions to other portions of the 2008 Final Program EIR to accurately reflect the revised and new discussions reflected above.

## How You Can Comment

The revised material is being circulated for public and agency comment for 45 days beginning March 11, 2010 and ending at 5 p.m. April 26, 2010. Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)<sup>1</sup> the Authority requests that reviewers limit the scope of their comments to the revised materials contained in the Revised Draft Program EIR Material.

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<sup>1</sup> Guidelines section 15088.5, subdivision (f)(2),

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Comments on the Revised Draft Program EIR Material can be sent to the California High-Speed Rail Authority in three ways under the subject line **“Bay Area to Central Valley Revised Draft Program-Level EIR Material Comments”**:

1. U.S. Mail: 925 L Street, Suite 1425 Sacramento, CA 95814, Attention: Dan Leavitt
2. Email: **comments@hsr.ca.gov**
3. Fax: 916-322-0827

### Public Meetings

The Authority will host two public meetings to accept comment on the Revised Draft Program EIR.

#### **Wednesday, April 7, 2010**

- **10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. – Sheriff’s Auditorium**  
55 West Younger Street, San Jose, CA 95110
- **5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. – Board of Supervisors Chambers**  
70 West Hedding Street, San Jose CA 95113

The public meeting venues are wheelchair accessible.

### Download a Copy

Visit the California High-Speed Rail Authority’s Web Site **www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov** to:

- View and download the Revised Draft Program EIR.
- Request an electronic copy or CD of the Revised Draft Program EIR.
- Locate a library near you to review a copy of the Revised Draft Program EIR.

### At the Library

Printed copies of the Revised Draft Program EIR have been placed in the main public libraries in the following cities: Fremont, Gilroy, Livermore, Menlo Park, Merced, Menlo Park, Modesto, Mountain View, Oakland, Palo Alto, Pleasanton, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Jose, Stockton and Tracy.

Please call the Authority at **(916) 324-1541**, or check the California High-Speed Rail Authority’s Web Site **www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov** for more information.

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## **The Next Step**

Following the public comment period, Authority staff will prepare responses to comments related to the Revised Draft Program EIR Material and include the responses in a Revised Final Program EIR Material. The Authority Board of Directors will then make a decision based on the entire Revised Final Program EIR Material and the prior 2008 Final Program EIR on how the high-speed train system will connect the Bay Area to the Central Valley, including selecting a network alternative, preferred alignments, and preferred station locations that will be addressed in greater detail in project-level environmental review. This decision will be made at California High Speed Rail Authority Board Meeting.

## **The Difference Between the Program EIR and Project EIRs for the High-Speed Train System**

The Program EIR identifies broad policy choices among the cities to be connected by the high-speed train system and the general alignments for connecting them. Work on the project-level environmental reviews for individual sections of the high-speed train system will lead to decisions establishing the specific track alignment for sections of the high-speed train system, including those connecting San Francisco to San Jose, and San Jose to Merced. This work is currently underway. The Revised Final Bay Area to Central Valley Program EIR Material and the Authority Board's decision on this document will inform the project-level environmental reviews.

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